

"voucher" system. Under this plan, seniors would face mounting financial pressures every year to move out of their fee-per-service system and into a managed care plan in which they would not be able to choose their own doctor.

I am a supporter of managed care, and I believe it is a valuable tool for controlling costs and improving quality in our health care system. I believe that seniors should be able to choose to join a managed care plan if they want to, and in fact, more than 70 percent of Medicare enrollees already have that option today. But it must be a choice freely made, not one coerced by financial pressures.

But it is exactly that kind of financial coercion that the House Republican plan would create. Seniors choosing to remain in the fee-per-service part of Medicare would face more than \$1,000 a year or more in added premiums, co-payments and deductibles. Even those beneficiaries who go into managed care will have their current benefits threatened as the proposed cuts squeeze harder and harder and the real value of the voucher declines.

When we hear numbers like these, we must remember who we are talking about here. The median income for Medicare recipients is \$17,000 a year. Seventy-five percent of all seniors make \$25,000 a year or less.

These are the people who would be pounded by a barrage of new expenses if they choose to stay in fee-per-service: higher copayments, higher premiums, higher deductibles.

One Republican proposal would raise the amount seniors pay out-of-pocket for their care from 20 to 25 percent.

The AARP estimates that another of the proposals would increase out-of-pocket deductibles—currently at \$100—to \$270 a year by the year 2002.

The average beneficiary receiving home health care services would pay \$1,020 more in 2002 than they do now.

Another provision of the Republican plan spells out exactly how the Republicans would attempt to stay within their extremely tight budget projections for Medicare. According to an internal memo leaked to the New York Times, "If program spending exceeds growth rates set in law, then outlay reductions will be triggered."

Under the Republican plan, what if Medicare starts to run out of money at the end of the fiscal year? Will seniors needing medical care in September be told to come back after October 1st? If spending is projected to exceed budgeted amounts, will Medicare announce part way through the year that it will no longer cover mammograms or that recipient copays for doctor visits will double?

The Republican plan would also reportedly include some means-testing to have more affluent seniors pay more for their coverage. I agree that some means-testing of Medicare benefits will probably be necessary in the long run.

We should not kid ourselves, however, about how much savings could be

achieved through means-testing. Eighty-three percent of all Medicare spending is for older Americans earning less than \$25,000 a year. There simply is not that much Medicare spending on wealthy seniors from which we could extract major savings.

CONCLUSION

The American people deserve to know about these changes. Seniors deserve to know. Their children, who could find themselves saddled with more and more of their parents' medical bills, deserve to know.

Everyone deserves to know about these changes for the simple reason that the American people care about Medicare, and they care deeply. A recent poll commissioned by the American Association of Retired Persons, shows that 89 percent of Americans support this program. Ninety-two percent see it as the only way older Americans could possibly have adequate health care. And 9 in 10 older Americans said they do not want to be a burden on their families.

In pushing for passage of Medicare 30 years ago, President Johnson said, "the specter of catastrophic hospital bills can [now] be lifted from the lives of our older citizens." I hope we will do nothing in this Congress to let that specter again stalk older Americans. I urge the majority to release its Medicare plan to the public immediately.●

IF YOU PICK THE FLOWERS YOU COULD EXPLODE

● Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, I have often spoken about the horrifying effects of antipersonnel landmines. There are 100 million of these hidden killers in over 60 countries.

Here in the relative security of the United States, we can only guess what it is like to live in places like Cambodia, Bosnia, or Angola, in constant fear of losing an arm or a leg or your life, or your child's life, from a landmine. That is a daily, terrifying reality for millions and millions of people around the world.

A recent article by David Remnick in the New Yorker magazine entitled "A Letter From Chechnya—In Stalin's Wake," illustrates what I am talking about. The Russians have dropped thousands and thousands of landmines from helicopters over Chechnya. I want to read the opening paragraphs of that article:

"If you pick the flowers, you could explode," Mayerbek said.

"What?"

"If you go off the road and into the field, there are mines. Russian birthday presents. Step on one, you might explode."

Twenty miles by mountain road from Grozny, the Chechen capital, it had seemed safe enough to get out of the Zhiguli, a banged-up tuna can of a car, and take a short walk. Apparently not. I backed out of the field of lilies and high grass, one soft step at a time.

"Better," Mayerbek said. "Much better. Now maybe let's get back in the car and get going."

Mr. President, if you pick the flowers, you could explode. A horrifying thought. But not really a thought at all. It is happening every 22 minutes of every day of every year. The overwhelming majority of the victims of these indiscriminate, inhumane weapons are innocent civilians.

My legislation, the Landmine Use Moratorium Act, which I plan to offer as an amendment in the coming weeks, aims to exert U.S. leadership to begin to put an end to this scourge. It would impose a 1-year moratorium on the use of most antipersonnel landmines. It has 45 cosponsors.●

THE 30TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MEDICARE PROGRAM

● Mrs. MURRAY. Mr. President, this Sunday, July 30 marks the 30th anniversary of the establishment of the Medicare Program. As this 30th anniversary approaches, it is important for us to reflect on the reasons this program was enacted, and its successes.

President Truman offered several proposals to Congress, and President Kennedy made health care for seniors an issue in his 1960 campaign. Over and over again, Democrats attempted to pass Medicare legislation. Over and over again, Republicans voted overwhelmingly to defeat it. In 1965, despite a record-setting barrage of advertisements by the American Medical Association and many doctors' threats to boycott elderly patients, President Johnson signed the Medicare bill into law on July 30, 1965. Even then, a majority of Republicans voted against it.

The Medicare Program is an important contract the U.S. Government has made with senior citizens. It is a lifeline for our Nation's elderly. It seems as though times have not changed—Republicans are still fighting against the Medicare Program. The same arguments are being used. And, Democrats are still fighting for seniors, and fighting to strengthen the program.

During this year's budget debate, Democrats tried to put money back into the Medicare Program by eliminating the tax breaks in the budget. We were defeated, time and time again.

I have heard rumors of a Republican plan to save Medicare. I have not seen an official copy of this plan, and this is worrisome. The Senate will be expected to act on the budget reconciliation plan by September 22, which is less than 18 legislative days away. How can we possibly ask our constituents to accept a plan that we have not even debated yet? From the little I have heard, this secret plan relies heavily on a voucher system, which will encourage seniors to buy the least costly health plan. This means losing their family doctor in many instances. If a senior chooses to stay in their current health plan, they will pay more—as high as \$1,000 more in premiums, copayments and deductibles.

Seniors simply cannot afford these additional expenses. The average senior citizen makes only \$25,000 a year. How can we expect them to pay more, while we give out tax breaks to the wealthiest of Americans.

I realize the Medicare system of yesterday does not meet the needs of the Medicare population today. It needs improvement. It needs reform. But simply forcing seniors into HMO's and cutting benefits to seniors is not the answer.

Seniors will pay more for less. Our aging population is growing, and growing faster than the money put into the Medicare system in the Republican budget. I worry about the families that have elderly parents, like I do. This so-called sandwich generation takes care of their own children and their elderly parents at the same time. They will feel the pain as their parents are unable to pay for their health care. The middle class will feel the squeeze.

My question is this: What will this secret plan the Republicans are proposing do to the seniors of this country? Why will they not make the details public?

As we near the 30th anniversary of Medicare, let us fix what is broken in the system. Let us get rid of the waste, fraud, and abuse in the system. And let us be honest and sincere with the American people. They understand sacrifice. What they do not understand is secret tactics, and bearing an undue portion of that sacrifice. We need to give some hope back to middle-income, working families in this Nation. Let us strengthen the program our predecessors rightly worked so hard for.●

MEDICARE'S 30TH ANNIVERSARY

● Ms. MIKULSKI. Mr. President, today, we celebrate the 30th anniversary of the passage of Medicare by the Congress. Thirty years ago, Members of this body took a courageous step and guaranteed health insurance coverage to seniors and the disabled—regardless of a person's income, regardless of a person's illness.

The struggle was not an easy one. In fact, it took 30 years of struggle by Democrats to pass Medicare. Through the unwavering leadership from Presidents Roosevelt, Truman, Kennedy, and Johnson, Medicare was finally signed into law.

What does Medicare mean to the seniors of Maryland and this country? Let me tell you.

Earlier this week, I visited senior centers in Maryland. I talked about the 30th anniversary of Medicare. And I listened to the seniors—who told me what it means to them to have Medicare coverage and of their concerns about the proposed cuts to Medicare.

Mr. President, who is going to speak for the senior couple in Catonsville, MD, who do not know if they will be able to afford higher Medicare premiums, particularly given all the out-of-pocket expenses like for prescription

drugs that Medicare doesn't even cover?

Who is going to speak for the widow I met at the Liberty Road Senior Center in Baltimore County that needs cataract surgery that can save her eyesight and doesn't know if Medicare will be there to pay for it?

And, Mr. President, who is going to speak for the sons and daughters of these seniors who after these cuts may be forced to balance the financial demands of helping their parents pay deductibles and copayments for necessary lab and screenings and the financial needs of their own children?

Mr. President, I am going to speak out—and speak out loudly and forcibly—for these seniors, their families, and their health care.

Medicare is a unique American success story. Let us not turn back the clock on this success. We should not be talking about downsizing and degrading Medicare.

On this 30th anniversary, we should be talking about innovations and improvements. I, personally, would like to see a prescription drug benefit and coverage for prostate cancer screenings, and we desperately need a long-term care policy.

Instead we are facing cuts that mean seniors will pay significantly more for the privilege of keeping their own doctor or going to the hospital of their choice. That is no choice at all. That is not the American way and that is not what Medicare is about.

Medicare is a commitment to America's seniors. Medicare says that in America, if you are over 65 or disabled, no matter what your income, we will stand by your side and you will get the health care you need. I intend to fight to keep this commitment. I intend to keep the "care" in Medicare.

This year, we are not only celebrating the 30th anniversary of Medicare, but we are also celebrating the 50th anniversary of the end of World War II. Fifty years ago, the Medicare generation organized, mobilized, and saved Western civilization. Now is the time once again, for all of us to organize, mobilize, and save health care for our seniors. Just as in the days of World War II, the GI Joe generation—the current Medicare generation—hunkered down and was committed to the cause. So must we.

I am here on the floor today to tell you that I am committed to the mission and meaning of Medicare. I am ready to fight the good fight. And I am prepared to do whatever is necessary to preserve and protect the health care benefits of seniors in Maryland and throughout this Nation.●

REMARKS OF THE HONORABLE JOHN DALTON, SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

● Mr. DODD, Mr. President, I want to take a moment to draw the attention of my colleagues to some very eloquent and pertinent words recently delivered

by the Secretary of the Navy John Dalton in my home State of Connecticut.

The text I am about to insert in the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD is the speech delivered by Secretary Dalton at the christening of the first *Seawolf* submarine on June 24, 1995, in Groton, CT. I believe it speaks volumes about our country and our future.

Therefore, I now ask that the text be printed in the RECORD and I commend it to my colleagues.

The text follows:

FOR OUR CHILDREN'S FREEDOM

Thank you admiral Boorda for those very gracious and warm comments. And thank you even more for everything you said about Margaret. Let me say that I agree with every word.

One of my great privileges as Secretary of the Navy is to name ships and appoint sponsors of those ships. It is a responsibility I take very seriously. I chose a very special lady to be the sponsor of this most special ship.

Let me give you an example of what kind of sponsor Margaret will be. She knew that today would be a day filled with such activity that she wouldn't be able to meet every member of the crew, and she wanted to know every member of the *Seawolf* crew.

So last week she got up in the middle of the night and caught the 4:30AM train to Groton and spent the day and evening with the Sailors of this ship. She will be your sponsor and champion for the life of this ship over the next thirty-five years.

It is said that a ship is imbued with the spirit of its sponsor and that indeed is a blessing for *Seawolf*. Through the course of its life this ship will have many fine commanding officers, and many outstanding Sailors in its crew. But throughout the life of this ship their will be but one sponsor. *Seawolf* and the United States Navy are very fortunate to have Margaret.

This is indeed a historic day, and I want to thank everyone who is here, I am told there is some twelve to thirteen thousand strong in number. I would like to make each and everyone of you an honorary *Seawolf* sailor.

I am also very proud to have some people who are special to me here today. It is rare that I have the opportunity to have close members of my family around, but my sons John Jr. and Chris are here today. I would like for them to please stand. My brother and my sister, Margaret's brother and her parents. We have lots of family and friends from Louisiana, Texas, Arkansas and Virginia. I would like for all of you to stand and be recognized.

Obviously, Margaret and I are very proud to be here. . . . But not simply because of the honor of participating in the christening of this submarine—the finest submarine in the world. . . . Not simply to applaud the men and women of the shipbuilding trades here at Electric Boat and the many contractors who contribute to the building of this ship. . . . Not just to honor the brave officers and sailors who will serve through the life of this vessel. But to also take an opportunity to recognize why we are building this submarine and why we need to build more.

A number of years ago, a public official—entrusted with the best interests of the citizens of his nation—reflected his personal judgement and the common wisdom with the following words:

"There is no excuse for [building] submarines . . . So far as naval armament is concerned, it will not be long until [we] recognize that the torpedo is obsolescent; the submarine out of date; and the seaplane of so limited utility that expenditure [should] not